

# **Reality vs. Myth: Mentoring Reexamined**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## **Abstract**

REALITY VS MYTH MENTORING REEXAMINED by COL Russell M. Livingston, U.S. Army, 53 pages.

Transformation and the current operational pace have created less time for senior mentorship. Additionally, mentorship is so loosely defined and understood that it often is mislabeled and wrongly identified. Mentorship could be viewed as such a special category of relationship that it is seldom ever accomplished. Mentorship may end up idealized so much that it seldom meets the expectations of those who experience it. More importantly, because the relationship is at times viewed as so unique and specialized many may not experience it at all. Further, those who do experience a special mentorship connection may induce a feeling in other officers that they too need this type of relationship to be successful. If mentorship is itself such a special category of interpersonal relationship many may have expectations that are not realistic.

On the other hand, having a mentor makes people feel special and important. This extra attention helps promote self-worth, particularly if the mentor is senior with a successful career. Officers who lack this kind of attention have the impression that the Army is impersonal and non-caring. Understanding the miscommunication about mentorship is important to fixing the idealized perception, if one exists. Consequently, increased understanding helps recognize how best to implement the concept for leader development and growth in the profession today. Clarifying the definition through case studies and historical examples provides illumination in order to help adjust expectation. While the mythological part of mentorship is not attainable, leader development certainly is; diminishing this myth and getting back to reality for this concept provides tremendous benefit on how to realistically understand, promote and implement mentoring.

This study establishes the background on how mentorship became adulatory. Research includes surveys, case studies, historical artifacts and some specific historical examples of mentorship, for example, the relationship between Fox Conner and Eisenhower. It conducts a thorough review of the current formal Army doctrine on mentoring and examines if there is a deficiency or confusion in regards to definition. This study documents the formal training and instruction in mentorship to determine the current emphasis and availability for leaders/officers at standard TRADOC schools. It reviews mentoring models and applications, and reviews current books and journal articles as well.

**Dedication:**

To my wife who has from the onset of our relationship mentored me and helped me develop educationally and personally beyond my wildest expectations.

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## Introduction

What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us. What we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.

–Albert Pine<sup>1</sup>

Providing personal and professional growth to promote the development of Army leaders in order to comprehend challenges of a continually evolving strategic environment is an enormous challenge. It demands war fighting skills, creativity and a degree of diplomacy combined with multicultural sensitivity to achieve balance and create a constructive cultural atmosphere for an enduring learning strategy.<sup>2</sup> What methods and how best to implement them for empowering leaders to learn and develop is an important consideration when constructing and improving a learning organization. Thus, an endeavor to understand and construct methods is helpful when taking into account where to focus limited time and resources. Leaders typically utilize three primary ways to provide knowledge and feedback for personal and professional growth; counseling, coaching, and mentoring.<sup>3</sup> One very important note concerning these three primary ways of developing others according to Army doctrine is that mentoring is completely voluntary and is described as the “voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of

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<sup>1</sup> *Famous Quotes and Quotations*. [http://www.famous-quotes-and-quotations.com/albert\\_pine.html](http://www.famous-quotes-and-quotations.com/albert_pine.html) (accessed March 16, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Army, *Field Manual 6-22, Army Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006), 5-15, para 5-82.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-11.

greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect.”<sup>4</sup>

However, if not everyone participates or is allowed to participate, then should this be one of the primary tools of development? In fact, during the development of the *Army Leadership* manual, FM 22-100,<sup>5</sup> many senior leaders had misgivings about incorporating mentorship into formal army doctrine. Moreover, senior leaders “believed that discussing these voluntary, long-term, personal relationships in official doctrine could be perceived as promoting or endorsing unfair and unequal treatment, and hence run the risk of compromising two of the army’s most cherished and hard-earned principles, equal opportunity and fairness for all.”<sup>6</sup> Though FM 22-100 has been replaced by *Army Leadership* FM 6-22, its effect is the same, a focus on mentoring as a developmental method or tool remains.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, mentoring is a tool that the Army uses to develop its leaders, but only through a voluntary relationship.

Furthermore, FM 6-22 states mentoring is the *only* developmental principle that promotes *growing* in the profession.<sup>8</sup> Thus, cultivating and educating mentors, as well as protégées, in how to utilize this valuable tool is necessary and relevant for a successful program. But close

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 8-14.

<sup>5</sup> FM 22-100 is the manual that was replaced by FM 6-22 in 2006. “IN 1985, CHIEF OF STAFF of the Army (CSA) General John A. Wickham, Jr., designated “leadership” as that year’s Army theme and addressed a framework designed to produce more effective Army leaders. The benchmark for the framework revolved around senior leaders challenging all leaders within the Army to be mentors to their subordinates. Mentoring immediately became an Army paradigm.” [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0PBZ/is\\_5\\_84/ai\\_n7069245/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0PBZ/is_5_84/ai_n7069245/) (accessed April 05, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> G. F. Martin, G. E. Reed, R. B. Collins & C. K. Dial, “The Road to Mentoring: Paved with Good Intentions,” *Parameters*, (2002, Autumn), 115-127.

<sup>7</sup> US Army, Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army 2006), 5-15, para 5-82.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., emphases added.



examination of senior level army schools reveals that no curriculum exists on how to teach leaders to be an effective mentor.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, what is found in doctrine is a term established which does not have any formal US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) standards or training which makes for a shortfall in measureable training, objectives and accountability. Just as important is the fact that in some instances in the Army, mentors are assigned and not voluntary at all; in other instances a kind of hybrid form of linking a pair together for mentoring is put forward as the official way to promote this doctrinal concept. One example is the senior mentor program at Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) where mentors are assigned; the other example is the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) web page assigning mentors.<sup>10</sup>

While this discussion of functional and doctrinal definitions puts some context to the phenomena of mentoring as a leader development tool, it does not completely explain the complexities that exist when considering how to correctly promote human relationships in a mentor and protégée pair. This consists in some degree of accessibility, environment where trust develops, as well as perceived personal and professional development. This must be considered and addressed if one aims to achieve some level of understanding to build up an all-volunteer

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Mr. Keith Beurskens, Chief, Institutional Leader Development Division (ILDD) Center for Army Leadership, on January 28, 2010. In it he explained that there is no instructional material for review on how to teach leaders to be mentors. During an interview with an instructor, LTC Mike Swehla, who has instructed for several years, stated though there is a class in ILE during the leadership block to discuss mentorship, students are confused about the term and have varying ideas about what the experience of mentorship should consist; at the conclusion of the class many students are as confused as before the class.

<sup>10</sup> Every year, retired general officers who work for defense industry companies are brought back as senior advisors and senior mentors. This practice costs the Department of Defense millions of dollars annually. Congress has requested that the inspector general investigate this practice. Vanden Brook, Tom; Dilanian, Ken and Locker, Ray, *Military's Senior Mentors Cashing In*, December 18, 2009, [http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20091118/1amentors18\\_cv.art.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20091118/1amentors18_cv.art.htm) (accessed February 6, 2010).

force with this tool. Leaders making judgments on how to invest in future leader development for a changing complex environment find this issue as the most important one the Army faces today.

General Martin Dempsey the Commanding General of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command states, “Leader development is the Army’s single most important competency.”<sup>11</sup>

However, mentoring is not simply one sphere of leader development, but in reality is a part of developing a person comprehensively, a complex process that goes through phases within a dynamic relationship.<sup>12</sup> Mentoring contains in reality a number of other competencies that are needed for successful leader development to include coaching and counseling. While coaching and counseling undoubtedly happen outside the mentorship relationship, they are also central to mentoring. Thus, mentoring encompasses all three of the principal ways outlined in doctrine for developing others.<sup>13</sup> Given this declaration, this monograph will address the question: Does the Army adequately mentor officers as part of its leader development? Subordinate questions include: what is the commonly understood definition of mentorship and where did the idea originate and does the Army expressly focus on educating mentors to fulfill this role in officer

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<sup>11</sup> AUSA Panel on Oct 6, 2009 Panel on Leadership Development for a 21<sup>st</sup> Army, General Dempsey, Commanding General, TRADOC and BG Cardon, Deputy Commandant of Army Command and General Staff College, discussed the eight leader imperatives one of which was producing leaders who are mentors. *Leader Development* (Retrieved Jan. 30, 2010, from TRADOC Live: <http://tradoclive.dodlive.mil/category/leader-development>)

<sup>12</sup> “Mentoring is a complex, interactive process occurring between individuals of differing levels of experience and expertise which incorporates interpersonal or psychosocial development, career and/or educational development, and socialization functions into the relationship. This one-to- relationship is itself developmental and proceeds through a series of stages which help to determine both the conditions affecting and the outcomes of the process. To the extent that the parameters of mutuality and compatibility exist in the relationship, the potential outcomes of respect, professionalism, collegiality, and role fulfillment will result. Further, the mentoring process occurs in a dynamic relationship within a given milieu.” Caldwell, Brian J., and Earl M.A. Carter, *Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning* (London: The Falmer Press, 1993), 10-11.

<sup>13</sup> Field Manual 6-22 *Army Leadership*, 8-11.

development, i.e. do some ignore mentoring as a result of numerous missions and combat operations? Consequently, increased understanding helps recognize how best to implement the concept for leader development and growth in the profession today. Clarifying the definition through case studies and historical examples provides illumination in order to help adjust expectation. While the mythological part of mentorship is not attainable, leader development certainly is. Diminishing this myth and getting back to reality for this concept provides tremendous benefit on how to realistically understand, promote and implement mentoring.

## **Background**

### **Origin of Mentor**

Much has been said about the term mentorship and the role of a mentor in the life of another and how that impact might change a life for the better. Yet, relatively speaking, the increased interest about mentorship and what the term means is quite new when considering the impact that mentoring has had on the professional community in the past and continues to have today. Learning about this idea exploded in the early 1980's and has had tremendous popularity for study in the civilian as well as military community ever since. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* noted that in the 1970's, few were writing about "mentoring" as only 33 articles emerged for that ten year period about the topic. As time passed, and more awareness developed about the topic, supplementary articles began to emerge: 730 during the 1980's. As the idea of having one word or concept which encompasses all aspects of personal development increased in popularity, interest in mentoring literature increased as well. By the end of the 1990's, there were

2,575 articles on the subject.<sup>14</sup> Today, a query on the internet about mentorship will reveal over two million hits on the topic and thousands of programs, articles, books and handbooks about the subject and how to use this phenomenon for professional and personal improvement and development. If the number of articles and books is any indication of interest then the understanding of the concept is well worth the time to extinguish any myths about mentoring and to help those interested in utilizing the concepts for personal growth.

An etymological reading sheds light on the term's evolving nature and the numerous attempts to find common ground for a definition. A closer look on how thoughts behind the term begin is revealing when trying to better understand the notion of how mentorship enhances or detracts from a leader development program. The term mentor, itself, is of Greek origin and has roots in mythology which has contributed, to a degree, in promoting ambiguity about the term. The initial establishment of the word and when it was anthropomorphized was with Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*.<sup>15</sup> Virtually all authors who examine the term mentor and mentorship refer back to this story in which King Odysseus sends Mentor, a childhood friend, back home in his stead to do what the king could not because he was off at war. The Encarta Dictionary: English (North America) defines mentor as a:

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<sup>14</sup> R. A. Gross, "From 'Old Boys' to Mentors," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, (Washington, D.C. , February 28, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Andy Roberts, "ATT.net." *History of Education Journal*, November 1999.  
[http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:DZmtZnuYWIwJ:home.att.net/~OPSINC/homers\\_mentor.pdf+andy+roberts+homer's+mentor+history+of+education+journal&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESiaY69xF\\_Iz\\_u1TtE53L4wtksEMtF1q7GX6POxRnpLYTNTRaNNm3GSnk05R\\_jI-818kl75N9e](http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:DZmtZnuYWIwJ:home.att.net/~OPSINC/homers_mentor.pdf+andy+roberts+homer's+mentor+history+of+education+journal&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESiaY69xF_Iz_u1TtE53L4wtksEMtF1q7GX6POxRnpLYTNTRaNNm3GSnk05R_jI-818kl75N9e) (accessed November 29, 2009), 2.

Teacher and protector of Telemachus in Greek mythology, the friend whom Odysseus left in charge of the household while he was at Troy and who was the teacher and protector of Telemachus, Odysseus's son.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, one discovers the origins of mentorship in the person of Mentor himself.

For an example of attenuated conceptual development, we can return to the word mentor and its first appearance in the story, *The Odyssey*. The story involves Mentor who was to provide Telemachus, King Odysseus's son, supportive guidance for his development.<sup>17</sup>

From this supposed relationship, the idealized term 'mentor' developed into a noun.<sup>18</sup>

However, *The Odyssey*, itself, when read in its entirety, does not support this idealistic view of mentor at all. In reality, Mentor is simply a friend of King Odysseus who is charged with the responsibility to help with the care for the king's home. The only reference to Mentor by King Odysseus is:

Remember your old friend and the good turns I've done you in the past. Why, you and I were boys together.<sup>19</sup>

No discussion of any nurturing is given at all by the king. Moreover, there is never any discussion of Mentor's role to be an advisor, counselor, or fatherly figure to Telemachus. Further, the story reveals that Mentor failed at his task; when King Odysseus returned he found his household in complete disarray.

Odysseus has come home, and high time too! And he's killed the rogues who turned his whole house inside out, ate up his wealth, and bullied his son.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Encarta Dictionary: English (North America) 2009., s.v. "mentor."

<sup>17</sup> *History of Education Journal*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> "The Oxford English Dictionary states that the word was first used in 1750 by Chestere in Letters to Son, 8th March," Andy Roberts, PhD, "Chapter 2," *Homer's Mentor*, (PhD diss., University College Birmingham, 2010), 4.

<sup>19</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, Robert Fitzgerald, ed., (Franklin Center, PA: Franklin Library, 1979), 453.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 467.

Convinced that Odysseus was dead, potential suitors were wasting the king's resources and about to have a contest to see who would take possession of the king's wife. Later it became apparent that Telemachus had little help from Mentor and now feared:

a far greater calamity to follow, one which may well bring my home to utter ruin and rob me of any livelihood" and his mother's unwanted suitors "slaughter our oxen, our sheep, our fatted goats; they feast themselves and drink our sparkling wine with never a thought for all the wealth that is being wasted. The truth is that there is no one like Odysseus in charge to purge the house of this disease.<sup>21</sup>

Where was Mentor during the calamity? In fact, it was the goddess, Athena, daughter of Zeus, who took on this role as guide, counselor, and guard. She did, however, take on Mentor's form for a short period of time as well as other forms.<sup>22</sup> Ironically, the idealized nature of mentoring came from this mythological association of a goddess and her favorite, Telemachus. This makes the personality of Mentor for a short time a supernatural one, yet Mentor still fails at the task given by the king.

This brief history illustrates the perplexing birth of the term 'mentor,' and lends some understanding as to why there is confusion today about exactly what mentors do and exactly the way the relationship is to progress in a formal as well as an informal setting. Adding even more confusion to the term is the large number of authors who provide credit to Mentor for such exceptional support, which is simply missing from the story.<sup>23</sup> Authors cite Mentor to be a

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 477.

<sup>22</sup> *History of Education Journal*, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Many authors have used this to support the idea of the modern view of mentorship. J. Carruthers, "The Principles and Practices of Mentoring," in *The Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning*, 1-8.; Barbara Field and Terry Field, *Teachers as Mentors: A Practical Guide* (London: Falmer Press, 1994), 1-5.; M. Murray, *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 1-10.; E. Parsloe, *Coaching, Mentoring and Assessing: A Practical Guide to Developing Competence* (London: Kogan Page, 1995), 1-6.

fatherly role model and counselor who was trusted to advise, teach, challenge and encourage.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, in this instance, the etymology affords some additional context to better move forward with the term from origin: “it would be very surprising if the classical mentoring relationship ...were to be readily found in modern organizations. With the passage of time and demands of the situations in which mentoring occurs, adaptations of the classical mentor-protégé dyad have proliferated.”<sup>25</sup>

Yet, if mentoring is allowed to adulate beyond reality, morale and confidence can be reduced. The breakdown of the modern expectation results in an unfulfilled anticipation.<sup>26</sup>

### **Attempts to Understand and Use Mentorship**

The topic of mentoring incites emotional excitement and enthusiasm when discussed by leaders and subordinates alike. When presenting the idea as a topic to a syndicate group, nearly everyone had a different context to use as a filter in determining what the term ‘mentor’ meant and what kind of actions specifically constitutes a mentor’s successful interaction with a protégé. What makes understanding perceptions difficult to study is the fact that very few failed mentoring

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<sup>24</sup> *The Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning*, 10.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> During the course of multiple sessions of the Pre-Command Course (2007-2009) where majors attending ILE were afforded the opportunity to socialize and exchange ideas with battalion and brigade command designees as directed by LTG Caldwell, the author observed on several occasions the discontent and disillusion associated with finding suitable mentors. During every session where these groups intermingled the topic of mentorship always arose.

attempts have been documented. Doctrine states that one learns more from failure than success.<sup>27</sup> However, if failed relationships between married couples are any indication of the difficulty that exists in forming a dyad, then failed linkups between two people for the purpose of mentorship must surely occur as well.<sup>28</sup>

Yet, for mentors or protégés to agree on the definition of what mentorship really means or what the experience should entail is in many instances as unique as the dyad formulation itself. The thoughts and expressions are almost as diverse as the individuals expressing them. Often officers have had a very good experience or a very poor experience. Some have never experienced mentorship, but believe that they should have been afforded the opportunity at some point to have been a protégé. Others believe they are an ideal mentor and should be sought after by subordinates for this purpose. However, some leaders, even though they feel well-suited to be a mentor, do not actually possess the best set of skills, to include self awareness, necessary to successfully fulfill the role.<sup>29</sup>

While defining the term among individuals is at times ambiguous, what a mentor *is* differs from the responsibilities and furthermore it is fraught with challenges. Thus, understanding mentoring responsibilities for those who participate adds complexity and is

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<sup>27</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, "Principles of Training," *Army Field Manual 7-0: Training for Full Spectrum Operations*, 2-73 (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Organizations do not publicize failures, in particular when there is substantial prestige at risk. Therefore one will not often read much about mentoring programs that fail. More importantly is the lack of academic study on mentorship failure. "Yet understanding the cause of other people's failure is often the key to one's own success." David Clutterbuck, "Why Mentoring Programs and Relationships Fail," *Workplace Performance Technologies*, December 2002, <http://www.workinfo.com/free/Downloads/100.htm> (accessed January 28, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> "Many also lack the depth of self-awareness that characterizes an effective mentor. In general, the more convinced someone is that they are a "natural" mentor; the more lethal they are likely to be." Ibid.



important to understand. Many scholars seem to define the responsibilities in very different ways, often intermingling the ideas between teaching, coaching, counseling with advising, sponsoring, caring and protecting.<sup>30</sup> Building an environment that could lead to either high or low expectations from participants depends on where one finds comfort in the wide range of responsibilities for the mentor's role. Daniel J. Levinson, author of *Seasons of a Man's Life* and who is extensively attributed with initiating the academic debate on mentoring, says:

No word currently in use is adequate to convey the nature of the relationship we have in mind here. Words such as 'counselor' or 'guru' suggest the more subtle meanings, but they have other connotations that would be misleading. The term 'mentor' is generally used in a much narrower sense, to mean teacher, advisor, or sponsor. As we use the term it means all these things and more.<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, what is very clear when examining the vast number of studies on the subject is the inherent difficulty encountered when attempting deliberate study on the term and the effects expected or intended. For example, what respondents mean when the term is utilized is often different from another's. For this reason, understanding the term is problematic and caution is needed when attempting to clarify the term's meaning. There is disparity among participants that allows for each person or each pair to develop independently and then who later on come to agreement as the formulation of the relationship develops and moves through stages of progression. Discussing this among participants is necessary to minimize unfulfilled

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<sup>30</sup> *The Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning; Teachers as Mentors: A Practical Guide*, 1-5; *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring*, 1-10.

<sup>31</sup> D.J. Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 97.

expectations on both parts: mentor and protégé.<sup>32</sup> Further, the term in Army circles often finds multiple meanings as well. This confusion initiates discussion as to what is really meant by the term mentor. For someone to understand and convey the meaning of a word, they must use terms and ideas in which to communicate it. A comprehensive understanding becomes apparent when the user breaks down the components to examine them individually (analysis) and then puts them together to understand their interaction (synthesis).<sup>33</sup>

This difference in how participants experience mentoring is, in fact, a call for careful and deliberate philosophy or understanding as one approaches conclusions. Participants who espouse differences may in actuality experience something different, even while the experiences may be similar, the perceptions may be different. The need for a definition is important in developing some consensual purpose of the term. The assertion can be made that “if no definitional agreement exists, how do we know we are talking about the same thing?”<sup>34</sup> It is apparent from the numerous books and articles published on the subject of mentoring that it is complex. The Army has chosen to include this term in its doctrine and use the idea for the purpose of personal and professional development. Yet, most of the discussion is confined to only two pages of text in FM 6-22, *Army Leadership*. This problem of defining the term and the actions associated with it may get to the core of why mentorship has had such turmoil in the execution for military as well

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<sup>32</sup> The *Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning*, 13.

<sup>33</sup> Michael J. Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, LTD, 1998), 92.

<sup>34</sup> P. Armitage and P. Burnard (1991), “Mentors or Preceptors? Narrowing the Theory-Practice Gap,” *Nurse Education Today*, 11 (3), 225-9.

as civilian programs.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly enough, however, is the lack of analysis available on failed programs for the purposes of improving. Some even go further when faced with the ambiguity of defining a mentor and suggest the term be retired and not used at all.<sup>36</sup> Thus, moving forward with the examination of how to understand mentorship is necessary.

## Examination

### Phenomenology/Hermeneutics

The greatest leader in the world could never win a campaign unless he understood the men he had to lead.

GEN Omar Bradley<sup>37</sup>  
Lecture at West Point, 1952

Understanding is foundational to leading as much today as it was when General Bradley made the above assertion. But, often when something seems all too obvious, it is not.<sup>38</sup> This is exactly when more analysis is needed. Mentoring might entice the unexpected into a trap, not

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<sup>35</sup> “Many lieutenant colonels and colonels express frustration at being labeled as poor mentors, and portrayed as contributing to the attrition of captains. Moreover, many feel they have behaved and led in the tradition of current senior officers under whose tutelage they developed over the past 20-plus years,” Gregg F. Martin, George E. Reed, Ruth B. Collins, and Cortez K. Dial, “The Road to Mentoring: Paved with Good Intentions,” *Parameters*, (Autumn, 2002), 115-127.

<sup>36</sup> “In a recent student paper at the Army war College entitled “leadership: More than Mission Accomplishment. Colonel Peter Varljen Recommended the Army do away with the “Mentor” term altogether and simply focus on educating leaders to develop their subordinates through effective teaching, coaching, counseling, and role-modeling.” Gregg F. Martin, George E. Reed, Ruth B. Collins, and Cortez K. Dial. “The Road to Mentoring: Paved with Good Intentions,” *Parameters*, (Autumn, 2002), 115-127.

<sup>37</sup> Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, *AR 600-65 Personnel- General Leadership Statements and Quote* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1985), 1.

<sup>38</sup> “Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. observed in 1913, we often ‘need education in the obvious,’” Michael W. Galbraith and Norman H. Cohen, *Mentoring: New Strategies and Challenges* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 17.

only when trying to apply the concept, but also in a temptation to over simplify in order to understand. Therefore, the approach one takes to understanding is important. Using phenomenology and hermeneutics as an approach to comprehend and to understand the concept of mentoring is helpful. While these terms may seem a little intimidating, they are really just very practical ways in which to study how one experiences reality and keeps that reality in the context where it occurred. Phenomenology, put into simple terms, attempts to “describe objects just as one experiences them.”<sup>39</sup> Phenomenology consists of merely clarifying anything that appears and the way in which it appears.<sup>40</sup> In the study of mentorship, people have what they feel, hear, and see, but they also have the perception of what they believe, imagine, assess, or choose. Perception is very often different than reality; in fact, what appears to be the case is often in stark contrast with what the truth really is. None-the-less, perceptions affect people and must be dealt with to influence change. When the perception is better than reality, though, a strange dynamic occurs when the discovery is achieved and reality sinks in.<sup>41</sup> If one then takes all this experience and applies it to reality while moving from the parts of a concept individually and then back to the idea holistically, a hermeneutical kind of understanding develops and assist with interpreting the text surrounding the topic.<sup>42</sup> Models that visually depict what people are thinking have

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Hammond and Jane Howarth, *Understanding Phenomenology* (Williston: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), 2.

<sup>40</sup> S.Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996).

<sup>41</sup> Phenomenology makes the claim that descriptions of commonplace experiences are often disingenuous and end up with “what this should be” as opposed to “what it is actually like,” Michael Hammond and Jane Howarth, *Understanding Phenomenology* (Williston: Blackwell Publishers ,1991), 2.

<sup>42</sup> “To understand a text bearing upon human affairs or a culture that guides human lives, one needs to be able to move dialectically between part and whole, in the mode of the hermeneutic circle.” Michael J. Crotty, *The*

limitations. However, they help to show, in part, the interrelation through visualizing some of the ideas about mentorship.

## Models of Mentoring

A mentoring relationship provides collaborative and experiential learning and may possibly be one of the most developmentally important relationships a person can experience in adulthood.

—B. Bova<sup>43</sup>

While relationships are the foundation of what makes mentoring possible, it is the maturing of the relationship that moves it from a more formal, less-revealing beginning to a more open exchange of thought and ideas and in some way accounts for what one perceives versus reality. This phenomenological development allows perceptions and reality to merge from a formal relationship to that of a *cautious, sharing, open*, and later to develop *beyond* as depicted in the model shown below. Moving the dyad into something that is productive to reprove and confirm behavior that leaders admonish or expect is an essential element of the mentoring model. Notice in the first model below how the relationship develops over time and how much closer it becomes as trust and friendship matures while the second model illustrates a nonlinear development.

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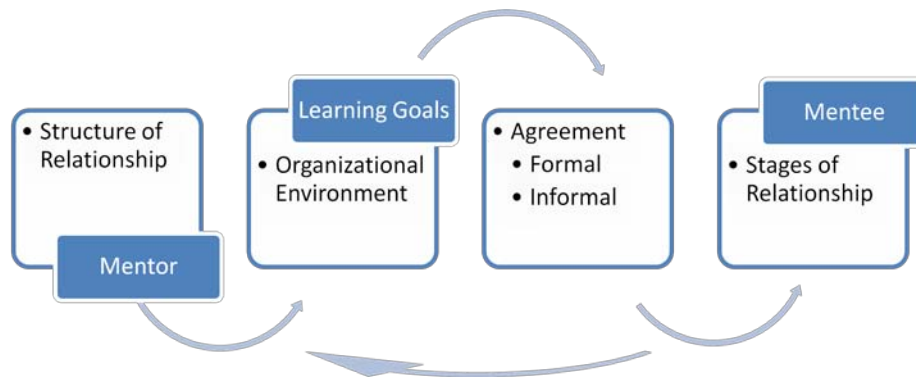
*Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, LTD, 1998).

<sup>43</sup> B. Bova, "Mentoring as a Learning Experience," V.J. Marsick, ed, *Learning in the Workplace* (New York: Croom Helm, 1987).

## The Development of a Dyad over Time.<sup>44</sup>

FORMAL	CAUTIOUS	SHARING	OPEN	BEYOND
<b>Developmental Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performed routine tasks</li> </ul> <b>Interpersonal Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check everything with mentor.</li> <li>Looking around the school</li> <li>Guest in the school</li> <li>Friendly or distant</li> </ul>	<b>Developmental Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some latitude in task selection</li> <li>Mentor asks for opinions on management issues</li> <li>Confidence in mentee's ability</li> <li>Involvement in managing school</li> <li>Some freedom in carrying out important tasks</li> </ul> <b>Interpersonal Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal issues discussed.</li> <li>Element of trust</li> <li>Openness about personal fears and difficulties</li> <li>Exploring different expectations</li> </ul>	<b>Developmental Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frank exchanges about tasks and performance.</li> </ul> <b>Interpersonal Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confidence in mentee's ability to take charge.</li> <li>Opinions respected and shared.</li> <li>Mutual understanding</li> <li>Mutual trust</li> <li>Atmosphere very informal</li> <li>Both parties accommodating</li> <li>Confide in each other.</li> </ul>	<b>Developmental Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentee left to complete takes alone.</li> </ul> <b>Interpersonal Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat each other as equals</li> <li>Reciprocal benefits of relationship recognized</li> <li>Experiences and problems discussed openly.</li> <li>Sense of real friendship</li> <li>Relationship about deeper and more personal issues</li> <li>Extremely informal</li> <li>High degree of trust</li> </ul>	<b>Developmental Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open discussions after attachment.</li> </ul> <b>Interpersonal Descriptors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking advice about professional problems</li> <li>Contact and friendship maintained</li> </ul>

## Non-linear Interaction as the Stages Develop over Time<sup>45</sup>



## The Army's Need

Department of Defense Directive, (DoD) Number 1322.18, of January 13, 2009 refers to the need for structuring training, education policies and cultural education in specific knowledge and skill requirements to improve professional development. Higher headquarters guidance to the

<sup>44</sup> *The Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning*, 82.

<sup>45</sup> This chart was generated by the author from ideas discovered through research on mentorship from various concepts.

Services and Joint Forces is fundamental in establishing priorities. This guidance helps leaders organize, prepare and conduct military training, educating and job-performance aiding, as well as determining the future direction of how these competencies develop the force.<sup>46</sup> This requires the innovative modernization of programs to facilitate improved personnel education and training in order to promote efficient and effective results.<sup>47</sup> Establishing and improving a competitive advantage in training and education programs through modern methodologies is necessary to keep up with technological changes and requires innovation to provide dynamic and superior personnel development skills. *The Department of Defense Strategic Plan for Transforming DoD Training* mandates alternative education and training platforms that are responsive to the needs of DoD and Services transformation.<sup>48</sup> A deeper and more thorough analysis of mentoring, to include the current perceptions as well as misconceptions through a phenomenological lens, may render enhanced mentoring methods as a viable solution for educating and training service personnel. It is important to understand that:

When conducted by professionals who understand adult learners and perform as skilled practitioners of interpersonal communication, mentoring can be a pivotal, educational event because it teaches adults to function more effectively as independent problem solvers and self-generating continuing learners.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “Training in the context of this vision includes training, education, and job-performance aiding,” *2006 Strategic Plan for Transforming DoD Training – Executive Summary*, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Director, Readiness and Training Policy and Programs, May 8, 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Department of Defense, Military Training, DoD Directive 1322.18 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, January 13, 2009).

<sup>48</sup> *2006 Strategic Plan for Transforming DoD Training – Executive Summary*, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Director, Readiness and Training Policy and Programs, May 8, 2006.

<sup>49</sup> *Mentoring: New Strategies and Challenges*, 7.

Past research illustrates that those who find mentors report an increased number of promotions and possess greater career satisfaction than do people who are without mentors.<sup>50</sup> In fact, a study for the Army conducted by Caliber Associates in conjunction with the Army Research Institute identified seven major benefits associated with mentor relationships: promotions, compensation, career mobility, job satisfaction, career and pay satisfaction, and career expectations.<sup>51</sup> Good mentoring relationships directly influence whether employees and managers feel engaged at work.<sup>52</sup> Study has indicated that an engaged workforce is an immeasurable asset to the organizations as described below.

Many organizations place a tremendous amount of emphasis on ensuring that employees, in particular middle managers, remain engaged and productive. The cost associated with replacing a middle manager or doing business with a disengaged employee is staggering. A recent Gallup study illustrates this point superbly. Only 26 percent of US employees are productive, loyal and engaged, 55 percent are just biding time and are not engaged, and 19 percent are overtly disengaged and are responsible for infecting others with disgruntlement.<sup>53</sup> Lost productivity in American businesses as a result of the lack of engagement is estimated to cost \$350 billion a

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<sup>50</sup> Tammy D.Allen, Lillian T. Eby, Mark L. Poteet, Elizabeth Lentz,and Lizzette Lima, "Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring for Proteges: a Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2004, 127-136.

<sup>51</sup> "Career outcomes that have been positively associated with mentoring include promotions, compensation, and career mobility. Mentoring also influences affective responses to the work place, including job satisfaction, career satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and career expectations," (S.G. Baugh & T.A. Scandura, 1999), "The Effect of Multiple Mentors on Protégé Attitudes toward the Work Setting," *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 14, 503-522.

<sup>52</sup> Ellen A. Ensher and Susan Elaine Murphy, *Power Mentoring* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 16.

<sup>53</sup> *Gallup Study: Engaged Employees Inspire Company Innovation*, October 12, 2006, <http://gmj.gallup.com/content/24880/gallup-study-engaged-employees-inspire-company.aspx> (accessed February 6, 2010).



year.<sup>54</sup> Further, the cost to replace one middle manager is in excess of \$100,000.<sup>55</sup> While this cost of disengagement for employees is significant, the cost of lost productivity is even higher.<sup>56</sup>

Analysis, in relation to cost, helps put into perspective the importance of reducing disengaged personnel who end up either leaving the service or account for lost productivity. Officer initial entry cost provides a useful example. The Army's Military Academy graduates are exiting the service at the highest rate in thirty years. West Point statistics reveal that 903 Army officers were commissioned in 2001. By 2006, 46 percent of these had left the service. Of the class of 2000, 54 percent of the 935 officers commissioned had left as of January, 2008.<sup>57</sup> While West Point contributes approximately 20 percent of the total number of those commissioned, it is indicative of an increased exodus of officers who have a high initial commitment in a militarized college environment where costs exceed \$250,000 per cadet. While this cost is high, the lost experience and time invested in training is considerably more. For example, officers upon completion of college and commissioning are first sent to more schooling in the form of the Officer Basic Course, and while the length of the courses vary by branch, some are as long as six months and must be completed prior to initial assignments. Additionally, at the four to five year mark, officers are again sent to school in the form of the Captain's Career Course which is also a six month course. Additionally, 10 percent of ROTC commissioned officers exit the service at

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Leslie H. Geary, *CNN Money*, December 20, 2003, [http://money.cnn.com/2003/11/11/pf/q\\_iquit/index.htm](http://money.cnn.com/2003/11/11/pf/q_iquit/index.htm) (accessed February 6, 2010).

<sup>56</sup> *Power Mentoring*, 15.

<sup>57</sup> Lawrence J. Korb, *The State of America's Ground Forces: Testimony Before the House Committee on Armed Services*, April 16, 2008, [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/04/military\\_readiness.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/04/military_readiness.html) (accessed February 6, 2010).

the grade of captain. This has happened at a time when the cost to train soldiers has risen by 60 percent; in 2000 this cost was \$75,000 per soldier and in 2006 it has gone to \$120,000.<sup>58</sup> This loss of junior-level officers costs the military in education, training, replacement, and lost productivity. Unfortunately an all-volunteer military has limited tools at its disposal to curb the loss of high-quality junior officers—particularly if war on two fronts continues. The Army has set, according to experts in the field, an unrealistic target to retain 95 percent of the company-grade officers, who are likely within the first ten years of service. This would put retention at a higher rate than the Army has managed since the Cold War ended and is likely to be unattainable.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, according to a recent Rand Study in the monograph series; *Leader Development in the Army: Views from the Field*, unit commanders have the greatest impact on junior officers as mentors and counselors. However, these same junior officers have the common perception that unit commanders' personalities and capabilities tremendously affect personal interaction; to them, it is either hit or miss.<sup>60</sup> Further, very few junior officers believe leaders discuss future duty requirements to a great extent and very little discussion of leadership skills is perceived to occur between them and their rater or senior rater.<sup>61</sup> Chart 1 displays what junior officers believed to be most important for leader development which is 'experience of leading a

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<sup>58</sup> Andrew Tilgham, "The Army's Other Crisis," *The Washington Monthly*, (December 2007). <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2007/0712.tilghman.html> (accessed April 6, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Schirmer, James C. Crawley, Nancy E. Blacker, Richard R. Brennen, Jr., Henry A. Leonard, Michael J. Polich, Jerry M. Sollinger, Danielle M. Varda, *Leader Development: Views From the Field* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008), xvii.

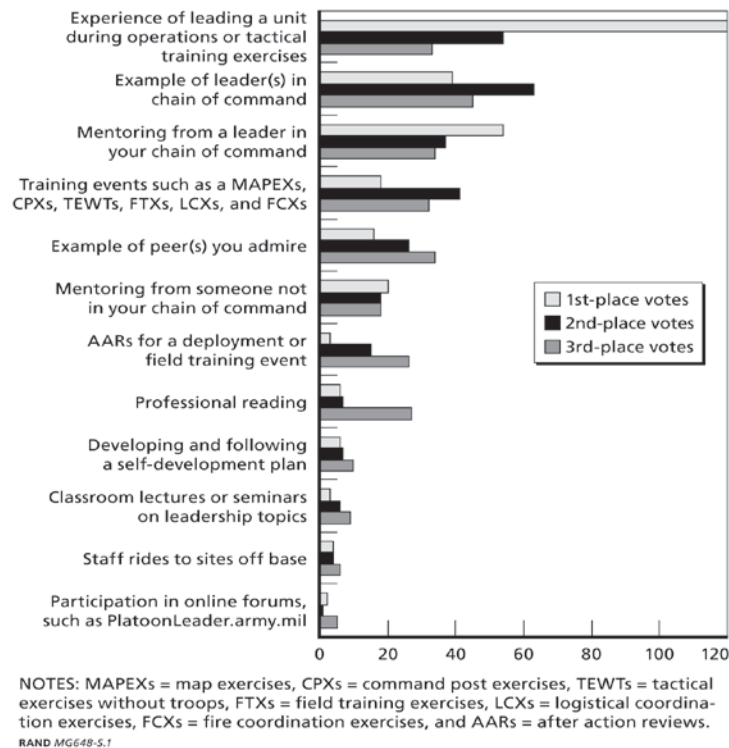
<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 61-63.

unit during operations or tactical training exercises, the examples set forth by their leaders in the chain of command and mentoring from a leader in their chain of command.’ These same officers placed other forms of leader development very low, the bottom three include; classroom lectures or seminars, on leadership topics, staff rides to sites off base, participation in online forums, such as platoonleader.army.mil. Yet, standard leader development programs are virtually nonexistent. All units carry out training on a multitude of collective and individual tasks; however activities to expand the broader assortment of leadership skills differ significantly in regularity, content, and value. Even required activities, are simply not completed with any consistency. Furthermore, programs intended to develop leaders are not all-or-nothing. Units are inconsistent with regards to leader development. Reasons for this disparity in leader development programs include: unit’s operational tempo, deployed, preparing to deploy, recovering from a deployment, geographical dispersion, units missions, and if the unit commander is engaged with leader development thus placing a priority on leader development programs.<sup>62</sup> A healthy dispersion of trained and trusted mentors in units with this kind of disparity may help take some of the pressure off the unit commander and get programs back on track.

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<sup>62</sup> Peter Schirmer, James C.Crawley, Nancy E. Blacker, Richard R. Brennen, Jr., Henry A. Leonard, Michael J. Polich, Jerry M.Sollinger, Danielle M. Varda, *Leader Development: Views From the Field* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008), 61.

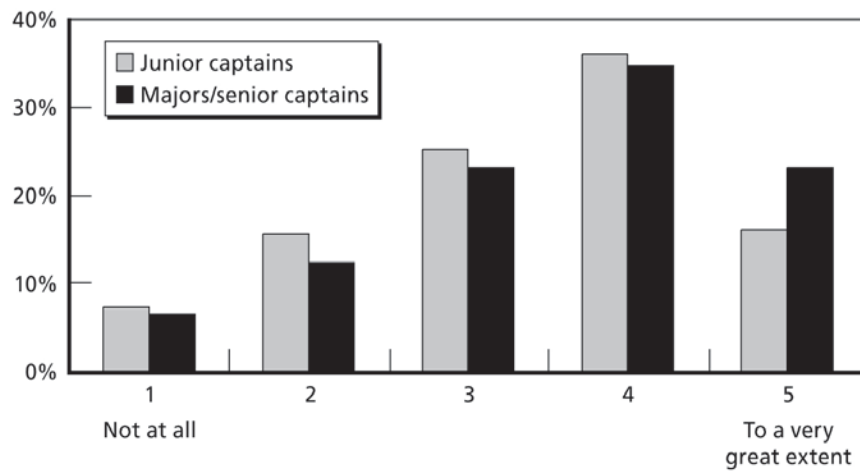
**Chart 1: Junior Captains' Ranking of Effectiveness of Leader Development Activities<sup>63</sup>**



Additionally, generational differences were observed by senior officers which led them to speculate that today's junior officers need more interaction and discussion from their leaders than did previous generations of officers. According to the RAND study, colonels and lieutenant colonels, when asked, perceived the current frequency of counseling, coaching and mentoring as happening with more frequency than junior officers perceived. The more senior officers have the perception that the leadership discussions were frequent while the charts below depict the more junior officer's perceptions.

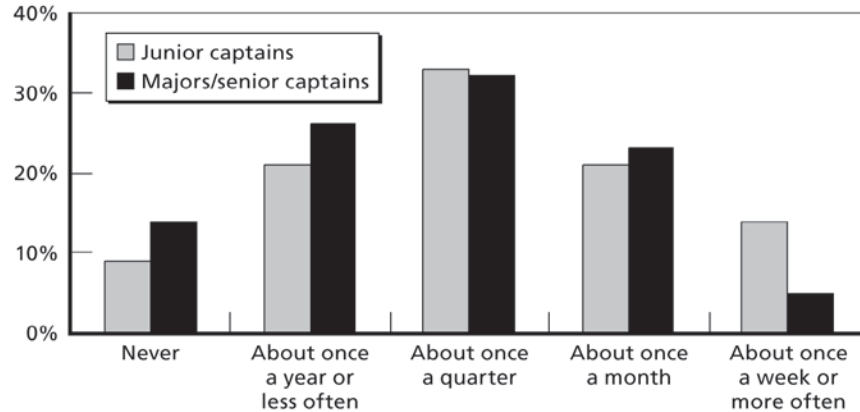
<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 26.

**Chart 2: Extent to which Officer Discuss Upcoming Duty Requirements with Someone in their Chain of Command<sup>64</sup>**



RAND MG648-S.1

**Chart 3: Frequency with which Officers Discuss Leadership Skills with their Rater<sup>65</sup>**

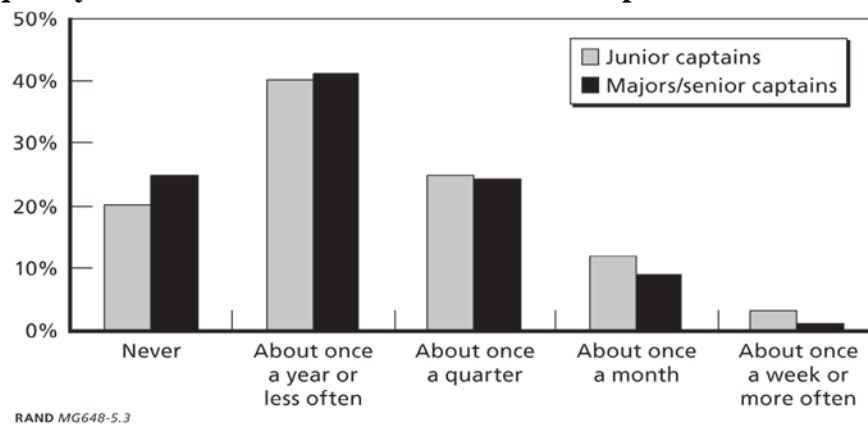


RAND MG648-S.2

<sup>64</sup> *Leader Development: Views From the Field*, 45.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

**Chart 4: Frequency with which Officers Discuss Leadership Skills with their Senior Rater<sup>66</sup>**



While virtually all junior officers rated experience and personal interaction among the top self-developmental activities, this does not, however, constitute a well-rounded leadership development program. Just because a unit has experienced combat does not mean that all the lessons learned were correct. According to the Rand study, perpetuating a quality leader development program is a core function that, for now, many units simply are not placing a priority on as the continued rotations consume more and more time for Army units.

### **Barriers to all Forms of Mentoring Relationships**

There are several barriers that exist outside of defining what a mentor is and the lack of time as a result of deployments when attempting to practice mentoring in real life circumstances. Among such barriers are fear of rejection, not listening or receiving the advice when given, lack

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

of trust or motivation, gender and generational differences, and lastly superior/subordinate relationships.<sup>67</sup>

Facing rejection is a natural part of life and human relationships. Rejection is possible in romantic relationships, in the work place, as well as from a stranger on the street. The more rejection a person experiences and the degree of pain that rejection inflicted, the more apt that person will be to guard against future possibilities of rejection. Rejection is intertwined with mentoring in several ways.<sup>68</sup> One could experience rejection when attempting to form a mentorship. It is not as though a person would simply ask another to be a mentor and be turned down as the only form of rejection; rather, it is the amount of time reciprocated from whom one deems worthy of fulfilling the role of a mentor. However, once a mentoring relationship has been established, keeping the relationship alive is also subject to rejection. This is a very delicate balance. When more guidance and assurance is needed for a mentee, it may not match adequately with the mentor's willingness or ability to offer it. This might lead to another form of rejection which is early termination of the relationship by one partner while the other is still in need.

Another barrier to successful mentorship is lack of listening from both parties alike. Not only must the protégée be willing to listen carefully, using good listening skills and digesting the mentor's guidance, but also the mentor must possess the same skill set as well.<sup>69</sup> Often times, a short-sighted listener can misunderstand with regards to professional or personal problems, where

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<sup>67</sup> *Mentoring: New Strategies and Challenges*, 69; Brad W. Johnson and Charles R. Ridley, *The Elements of Mentoring* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 109-123.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

if close listening had occurred, a better understanding would have led to a more accurate commentary on the subject and facilitated understanding as well as improved growth and performance.<sup>70</sup> The environment where listening takes place is very important to consider when determining how to make progress with this skill.<sup>71</sup> One can observe very quickly if active listening is occurring or not. When listeners take phone calls, check e-mail, review inbox documents or allow any number of other distractions to occur during conversations with subordinates, the likelihood of miscommunication is high. While the distraction may not be this overt, other distractions can cause miscommunication. For example, if someone spends all their time thinking about what to say between speaking than the same affect may occur; miscommunication and a perception that what the speaker has to say is not important. Just as important as missing what is communicated, though, is missing the opportunity to learn about the individual person through non verbal messages as well; this too is a missed opportunity. One issue with listening is that it is often taken for granted by most, though without listening, communication stops! In the 10th anniversary Edition of Mitch Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie*, The Best-Selling Memoir of All Time, Mitch remembers many of the lessons in life he learned from a college professor, Morrie Schwartz, whose wisdom changed Mitch's life along with the lives of millions of readers; one such lesson was how to listen:

I remembered how he used to teach this idea in the Group Process class back at Brandeis. I had scoffed back then, thinking this was hardly a lesson plan for a university course. Learning to pay

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<sup>70</sup> "If recent studies are accurate, the Army's neglect of such key skills as listening and counseling in the Officer Education System is a critical shortcoming," G. F. Martin, G. E. Reed, R. B. Collins, & C. K. Dial, "The Road to Mentoring: Paved with Good Intentions," *Parameters* (Autumn 2002), 115-127.

<sup>71</sup> *The Elements of Mentoring*, 109-123.



attention? How important could that be? I now know it is more important than almost everything they taught us in college.<sup>72</sup>

As a child, the ability to speak is taught by parents. As an adult, classes in public speaking are taught in both high school and college. However, there are a few classes available on listening in either high school or college curriculum.<sup>73</sup> Thus, it is hardly astonishing that there are fewer skilled active listeners. In fact, the Fort Leavenworth Advanced Operational Art Studies Fellowship has a specified requirement to speak publicly, yet no instruction or outside requirement equivalent on active listening. Instructive classes to improve this area might reap significant important results.

A third barrier to successful mentoring is lack of trust. In order to develop the type of relationship in which the mentor can be effective, participants must first be perceived as trustworthy and able to keep personal issues in confidence; this trust builds as the relationship goes through different stages.<sup>74</sup> Both parties in a mentoring relationship must realize and accept the fact that a high level of trust is essential in order for an effective relationship to develop.<sup>75</sup> What is considered confidential to the younger, less-experienced participant may differ widely from that of the senior. Before embarking on this journey, a clearly defined code of conduct concerning the confidential status of the mentor-protégé relationship is crucial for success!

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<sup>72</sup> Mitch Albom, *Tuesdays with Morrie* (New York: Broadway, 2002), 136.

<sup>73</sup> After visiting four major university web pages (Oklahoma University, Kansas State University, University of Missouri, Kansas University, the only courses available on listing were specialty courses for elementary education or for language comprehension proficiency. However every university had courses in general education requirements for public speaking. <http://catalog.ou.edu/current/index.html>, <http://courses.k-state.edu/catalog/>, <http://registrar.missouri.edu/degrees-catalogs/index.php>, <http://catalog.k-state.edu/>.

<sup>74</sup> *The Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning*, 82.

<sup>75</sup> *Tuesdays with Morrie*, 136.

Trust requires time to build and it is important to give serious consideration in choosing the right mentor. It takes time to develop a positive opinion of those one would want to seek as a mentor. Ellen Ensher, professor of psychology at Claremont McKenna College and associate dean of the Henry R. Kravis Leadership Institute, states in her book, *Power Mentoring*, “Trust is the fundamental currency exchanged in many mentoring relationships.”<sup>76</sup> Frequently, a good relationship develops between a superior and a subordinate that allows for trust to develop and sets the stage for a mentoring relationship though many times subordinates will not completely open up to the person that is rating them often because of the time needed to develop trust.<sup>77</sup> Also when the relationship is rater to rated secrets, difficult criticism and loyalty are more difficult to manage.<sup>78</sup> Though this lays the foundation or opportunity for mentorship relations in the future, many times it is only after the official relationship has ended the informal mentoring relationship will really begin.

Further barriers include a lack of motivation or genuine caring for another person on either side of the mentoring relationship. Graduating college, completing a successful command and finishing graduate school are all examples of accomplishments which require tremendous time energy and motivation. Similar effort is also needed to successfully complete a mentoring relationship requiring a long term commitment. The genesis for this motivation is genuine caring or empathy and focuses on another’s success. According to W. Brad Johnson, an Associate

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<sup>76</sup> *Power Mentoring*, 142.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

Professor of psychology in the Department of Leadership, Ethics and Law at the United States Naval Academy, and a Faculty Associate in the Graduate School of Business and Education at Johns Hopkins University and Charles R. Ridley, professor of counseling psychology and associate dean for Research at the Indiana University graduate school, in their work *The Elements of Mentoring*, “Protégés in all arenas rate mentor warmth and caring as among the most important mentor traits. Warmth is an attitude of friendliness, approachability and openness.”<sup>79</sup> This is problematic in training or as a learning objective. One either cares for others or does not. In fact, ‘selfless service’ is one of the army values adopted as critical for leaders and Soldiers alike. Inspiring Soldiers to internalize this particular Army value is one way to help get the focus off of self and promote a mentoring environment where care for others is important.

Additional barriers to a successful mentoring relationship are gender differences and generational gaps.<sup>80</sup> Males with the appropriate experience and proper motive often prefer not to approach younger females as candidates for a protégé because of the unprofessional perceptions that might be created as a result of a male-female mentoring relationship. Often this is due to the amount of time and intimacy that is needed in a mentoring relationship.<sup>81</sup> For younger females, this gender barrier is as cumbersome for similar reasons. When younger females approach more senior experienced males, often these advances can be misconstrued. The small numbers of senior-level minority leaders likewise affects the availability of mentors for soldiers of minority ethnicity.

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<sup>79</sup> *The Elements of Mentoring*, 44.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> F. C. Budd, “Mentoring in the US Airforce,” *Performance Improvement* (2007) 6 (3).

Moreover, generational barriers exist due to the dynamics between the Baby Boomers verses those of Generation X. Boomers, identified as persons born before 1964, have a core value of “service before self,” which is often cited as why late hours are normal when work needs to be done. Gen Xers, identified as those born after 1964 but before 1982, often have a different work-life balance and are decidedly in the arena of ‘having a life’ outside the work place.<sup>82</sup> “Boomers often interpret Generation Xers’ tendencies to limit overtime and commit to external activities, such as fitness and hobbies, as a sign of lack of discipline or ‘not being serious about their careers.’”<sup>83</sup> Understanding that this gap exists, and then maintaining continual communication to further prevent additional gaps, is critical. Businesses may have less of a problem with this than the Army because young, well-educated managers are often integrated with higher-level management sooner while the attainment of military rank comes gradually over long periods of time.<sup>84</sup>

An increased workload and the operational tempo of today’s army also lead to many barriers in a thriving mentoring relationship. There is much to be accomplished in the day-to-day operations, given the current fast-paced operational tempo; it is a challenge to balance the essentials necessary for the execution of the mission when there is little time available for mentoring or other forms of leader development.<sup>85</sup> Many times, senior leaders are overwhelmed

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<sup>82</sup> Leonard Wong, *Generations Apart: Xers and Boomers in the Officer Corps*, Monograph, Department of the Army (Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, 2000), v.

<sup>83</sup> *Performance Improvement*, 6 (3).

<sup>84</sup> *Generations Apart: Xers and Boomers in the Officer Corps*, v.

<sup>85</sup> *Leader Development: Views From the Field*, Study, 70.

with just getting the mission successfully completed and arriving at the next deployment destination.

Another barrier is due to the supervisor/subordinate relationship. “Many mentees felt in a quandary since one of the items they needed assistance with was how to manage conflict, especially related to issues with their direct supervisors.”<sup>86</sup> Additionally, some potential mentees may feel intimidated, self-conscious, or unworthy to approach a supervisor and consequently may fail to initiate the mentoring relationship.<sup>87</sup> In summary, the numbers of barriers that exist often limit the long-term success of mentoring. However, some groundwork with educating leaders about these kinds of road blocks will not only enhance the possibility of building an environment of mentorship, but also help identify areas the leaders need to spend more time concentrating on with leader development as well.

### **Pairing Mentors and Protégés Circumspectly**

Research has identified three dominant ways to form the relationship dyad; relations initiated by the protégé, relationships initiated by the mentor, and those that develop through serendipity.<sup>88</sup> However, both mentors and protégés have a tendency to be drawn to characteristic traits and interests that are similar to their own.<sup>89</sup> Further, people with similar race and gender have a higher

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<sup>86</sup> *Performance Improvement*, 6 (3).

<sup>87</sup> Kristopher A. Singer, 1LT, "An Assessment of Mentoring Functions and Barriers to Mentoring," (master's thesis, Graduate School of Engineering and Management of the Air Force Institute of Technology Air University Air Education and Training Command, [www.carlisle.army.mil/library/bibs/mentor02.htm](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/library/bibs/mentor02.htm), 1999), 16.

<sup>88</sup> *The Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning*, 13.

<sup>89</sup> E.H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963).

likelihood of initiating a mentoring relationship.<sup>90</sup> These relationships form in an environment that is established in either an informal or formal setting. Formal settings have higher authorities that often provide instruction through an established program. Informal programs are those where the mentor and protégé jointly pick each other. Considerable consensus from research agrees that the most successful programs as measured by effectiveness are ones where partners have the independence to establish the relationship on their own.<sup>91</sup> Thus, developing mechanisms that facilitate this approach, while slightly more problematic, produce the results desired in regards to development and professional growth. Understanding formal and informal characteristics of mentoring is vital to successful mentorship and is addressed.

## **Formal Mentoring**

Many organizations look for ways to professionally develop and improve junior personnel. Thus, organizations often implement formal mentoring programs in order to achieve their goals. Michael W. Galbraith, professor of adult education in the Department of Educational Leadership at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, currently serves as editor-in-chief of the national book series Professional Practices in Adult Education and Human Resource Development. Norman H. Cohen, associate professor of English at Community College of Philadelphia, holds a doctorate in adult education and is actively involved in understanding and studying mentoring theory. These men state in their work, *Mentoring: New Strategies and Challenges* that “A formal mentoring program occurs when an organization officially supports

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<sup>90</sup> Belle R. Ragins and John L. Cotton, “Mentoring Functions and Outcomes: A Comparison of Men and Women in Formal and Informal Mentoring Relationships,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1999.84: 529-550.

<sup>91</sup> *The Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning*, 13.

and sanctions mentoring”<sup>92</sup> Organizations often have mixed results with implementing formal mentoring programs. Nevertheless, 60 out of 100 of the best organizations recognized by *Fortune* magazine, support formal mentoring programs.<sup>93</sup> Further, the U.S. House of Representatives has approved \$100 million in federal funding to promote formal youth-mentoring programs in an effort to help children “at risk” improve skills and to prevent recidivism for troubled youth.<sup>94</sup> Unfortunately, research has uncovered an inability of formal mentor programs to accomplish what was promised and many participants are left vulnerable and disenchanted.<sup>95</sup> Looking at two examples within the Army will help illustrate the formal program concept.

## **Examples:**

### **TRADOC Pilot Mentor Program 2000-2002**

The continued perception of the need for mentorship in the military ranks by Army senior leaders resulted in a pilot mentor program starting at Fort Leavenworth in 1999. Army leaders recognized the lack of mentoring and mentorship of junior officers. Therefore, senior Army leaders tasked Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) with designing and implementing the US Army’s Pilot Mentor Program for Officers (2000-2001). This program consisted of approximately 2026 students at the Command General Staff College (CGSC) in order to

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<sup>92</sup> Lisa Finkelstein and Mark Poteet, *Blackwell Handbook of Mentoring*, Blackwell Reference Online, [http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/tocnode?id=g9781405133739\\_chunk\\_g978140513373921](http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/tocnode?id=g9781405133739_chunk_g978140513373921)(accessed April 4, 2010).

<sup>93</sup> *Power Mentoring*, 18.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

determine the overall benefit in assigning mentors within the course. This program consisted of three phases: Phase One held during the first term of academic year 2000-2001, Phase Two, during the second and third term of 2000-2001, and Phase Three conducted during the first term of academic year 2001-2002. It was developed with the intent to augment the educational experience with additional expertise “from retired commanders with battalion or brigade and operational experience; assist the faculty by providing additional mentoring, counseling, coaching, training, and educating of students; and ensure continuity of CGSOC course development, instruction, and academic programs.”<sup>96</sup>

Evaluation of the program consisted of three steps which coincided with the three phases of the overall program. The intent was to assess and provide input at each phase of the program in order to make adjustments throughout and provide recommended improvement continually. A very detailed data collection process included “student surveys, student focus groups, group discussions, and individual interviews with students, faculty, department directors, division supervisors, and mentors.”<sup>97</sup> The specified phased collection process resulted in understanding the students’ exposure to the mentors and its impact that exposure had on CGSC students; exactly how much mentoring occurred; and the perception of students as well as mentors in the benefits of formal mentoring. Additionally, the study determined the weakness of the mentor program and

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<sup>96</sup> Patricia Kinney, Ph.D, Daniel Bretl, and Fay Howard, *Evaluation of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pilot Mentor Program*, White Sands Missile Range: Department of the Army, TRADOC Analysis Center-White Sands Missile Range (TRAC-WSMR) (November, 2002).

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., iii.



attempted to make adjustments throughout the study to improve the program as necessary. Findings were presented by phase to illustrate the program's initial design to self-correct.

The vast majority of students and faculty indicated that Phase One "provided little benefit." In fact, seventy-five percent of the focus groups said assigning mentors formally was the wrong approach when trying to conduct a successful mentorship program. The students felt that having an assigned mentor who does not know them personally provided no value; some assessments indicated that this approach actually hindered more than it helped. Students wanted mentors who had mutual interest, respect, and trust for those they were mentoring. Mandatory counseling with this group of mentors in Phase One ended with negative results as well. In some cases, instructors were contradicted and criticized by the mentors in the class. Ten of the sixteen student focus groups interviewed in Phase One provided mostly negative comments about the program and eighty percent of the students in the ten focus groups who made primarily negative comments made the comment that "What he is doing is not mentorship."<sup>98</sup> Just as important to the evaluation of this phase of the program were the comments from instructors, department directors, and the mentors themselves. The conclusion from this group was that "there were very few benefits."<sup>99</sup>

Phase Two improved the program through changing the role of the mentors to one of Subject Matter Expert (SME), but, according to the report, it still had "drawbacks."<sup>100</sup> The improvement came from students making the comment that mentors' expertise had added value,

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., iv.

but the drawback was that the number of students that benefited was too small relative to the cost. Thirty-six percent of the students involved in Phase Two of the Pilot Mentor Program had no contact at all with any of the mentors. Yet, fifteen percent of the students that did have contact made the same comment as in Phase One that “What they are doing is not mentorship,” and ten percent of this same group stated “not much benefit to the program.”<sup>101</sup> However, on a positive note concerning course instruction, thirty-six percent of this same group made the comment that the “mentor knows more than the instructor”<sup>102</sup> While this, in general terms, was positive toward improving class instruction, it came across as negative overall and created a very strained relationship between instructors and SMEs in the classroom. Additionally, this kind of nervous tension in the classroom created confusion among the students as to who was in charge and who ultimately to go to when a problem arose.

Phase Three, the final phase of the mentor program, made some fairly significant adjustments to help correct the negative impact the first two phases created for the pilot program overall. The greatest benefit, according to the report, was moving mentors to the position of a primary instructor, as well as continuing the SME responsibility previously added during Phase Two. These two changes were in addition to trying to fulfill the mentorship role with the students. This move received positive comments from not only the students, but also the faculty. Yet, there were still a number of drawbacks with this adjustment to the program. Seventy nine percent of the students reported they had limited or no contact with the mentors. Sixteen percent

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

of the students said that when the mentor was in a role other than instructor or SME, they “interrupted the instructor, corrected him, or made irrelevant comments.”<sup>103</sup> However, the mentors stated the additional responsibilities of instructor and SME consumed their time thus leaving little opportunity to mentor students.<sup>104</sup> Students who had contact with the mentors in ways other than as primary instructors did not consider the program beneficial and these students were mentored more often by the non-mentor faculty and staff than by the contract mentors.<sup>105</sup> As a result of the negative feedback, the contract was terminated and the program ended as of AY 2002.

### AKO'S Mentorship Community

Another way the Army has invested time and resources into leader development is to foster a dedicated formal on-line mentorship program through the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) web page.<sup>106</sup> The site is intended to build on the Secretary of the Army's, the Army Chief of Staff's and the Sergeant Major of the Army's strategic mentorship initiative.

There are many honorable ways to leave a legacy; our focus for 2005 is on leaving a legacy through mentorship...What we, together, are asking each military and civilian leader is to make a commitment to one person beyond the chain of command starting this year and continuing on to future years.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., iv.

<sup>106</sup>*Army Knowledge on Line, Home Page*. (n.d.). from Army Knowledge Online: <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal/index.jsp> (accessed January 20, 1210).

<sup>107</sup> U.S. Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey; U.S. Chief of Staff GEN Peter J. Shoemaker; and Sergeant Major of then Army Kenneth O. Preston, (14 July 2005), *Leaving a Legacy through Mentorship* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army).

While this aspiration and heartfelt desire is very admirable, the implementation is loaded with complexity. From this directed memorandum, the Department of the Army leadership, the Army G-1 (responsible for personnel actions) implemented the Army Mentorship Community and Resource Center. Anyone with AKO access has this resource available. The intent of this tool is to facilitate and promote a mentorship relationship through a technologically-advanced means in an effort to increase leader to led mentoring exchanges. Further, the resource center web page provides other tools to help facilitate the establishment of a mentor/protégé pair.<sup>108</sup> A mentor/protégé is provided the opportunity to register on the mentorship web page and input personal information and select the type of mentor/mentee relationship based on availability and preference as illustrated in appendix 1; Army Mentor Profile Details.<sup>109</sup> Once the mentor has completed the Army Mentor Profile Details form and submits the data, the mentor is then able to view possible mentee matches. These matches can be viewed individually to be examined for compatibility. The mentee's email address is included so that direct contact can then be made. It is also possible to do a search for a mentor by utilizing profile criteria. A query of total current mentors by rank revealed forty-eight majors; forty-six lieutenant colonels; thirty-one colonels; zero brigadier generals and one major general available. After discussing this result with the officer responsible for managing this forum, however, it became clear that if the profile was not filled out properly, this would skew the total

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<sup>108</sup> "The resources provided on this site can help make finding a mentor or mentee a little easier. There are a variety of references that you may find useful; for example, articles that explain the various aspects of mentorship and the role of a mentor or mentee; a mentorship handbook; a sample Individual Development Action Plan; and a sample Mentorship Agreement. Also, you can search the database for a mentor or mentee that fits your search criteria, or join a forum and ask the larger mentorship community specific questions or seek advice from someone in your field." *Army Knowledge on Line, Home Page*, (accessed January 20, 1210).

<sup>109</sup> *Army Knowledge on Line, Home Page*, (accessed January 20, 1210), found in the personal information section.

results. Thus, what a user sees as available is not the actual total as illustrated in Appendix 2 and 3 Administrative Reports<sup>110</sup>

Additionally, there are forums available through the Mentorship Community web page that facilitates discussions for participants. These forums are categorized by branch as well as DA civilians, retirees, spouses and multiple others for a total of 84 separate categories. Of those categories, only thirty-two had comments posted; in most instances months, however, or even years lapsed between responses.<sup>111</sup> For example, in the military police category, four total entries with questions were posted and three were never answered. Furthermore, less than one percent of the 1.9 million AKO users access the mentorship web page. While the numbers who access the web page are few, the AKO mentoring forums are a technological method to promote mentoring exchanges through a virtual environment in order to further officer professional development.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages of Formal Mentoring:

The formal mentoring approach, for some, offers a degree of control as well as providing objective data on goals and determining its effectiveness. Further, when mentoring is formally sponsored by an organization, the program takes on the official endorsement of that organization and adds credibility to the practice. This puts the responsibility for planning and organizing in the hands of the leaders of the organization and provides a formal mechanism for feedback whether

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<sup>110</sup> LTC Carlson is the officer who is responsible for oversight of the web page as an additional duty, Carlson, LTC Jay D. *Army Mentorship Database Stats*, HQDA DCS- G-1, Email attachment, February 7, 2010.

<sup>111</sup> *Army Knowledge on Line, Home Page*, (accessed January 20, 2010).

good or bad. This offers leaders the opportunity to intervene in order to give recognition or censure where appropriate.<sup>112</sup>

Unfortunately, mentoring relationships do not always succeed. However, some of the most frequent problems with formal mentoring relationships include a mismatch between the mentor and the protégé and unrealistic expectations from either party. Moreover, a mismatch between the mentor and the protégé can be a cause of failure in the association when one or both members of the relationship may feel uneasy with the other, or they may not be able to achieve the level of friendship necessary for rich communication. Problems in the affiliation can also occur if the protégé expects or demands too much from the mentor. It is important, therefore, that expectations are clearly-defined from the beginning. The protégé should not expect the relationship to meet every need, nor for it to continue indefinitely.

More disadvantages of formalized programs are that participants in these mentor programs either feel that the match is not what is needed and thusly, it becomes ineffective, or the arrangement can even detract from the learning experience. This awkward arrangement causes the match to become cumbersome and unsuccessful in accomplishing any professional development for the protégé; it too, can cause the mentor to feel inadequate as the momentum of progress is lacking. Formal pairing of mentor and protégé often stagnates with one or the other waiting similar to the challenges of practicing blind dating.<sup>113</sup> When the formal approach is attempted through electronic means, the relationship fades even faster. Practical experience strongly

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<sup>112</sup> *Mentoring: New Strategies and Challenges*, 10.

<sup>113</sup> *Power Mentoring*, 18.

suggests forcing people together does not work for the population at large. This was found to be the case with the formal pilot program established by both the Army leadership at Fort Leavenworth and on the AKO mentorship community. On the AKO site for example, multiple locations exist on the site to ask questions and get answers for professional development, yet every visit to the site showed some questions were just not answered at all and others had very long periods between answers; years passed on many questions. This seems indicative of many formal programs; participants look for the other to tell them what they need or should do but during these awkward encounters expectations are not clear. While encouraging volunteers to participate in mentorship activates is not such a bad idea, attempting to formalize the program will likely end in failure for a large portion of the population. Tremendous thought and study is necessary before implementing actions that will promote an exchange among participants for the purpose of mentoring or professional development to have some level of success. Furthermore, it is very clear that for a successful exchange to occur between humans, it must first have some basic elements present. A few basic ones would include trust, respect, interest, feeling and overall compatibility if the intent is to promote a successful mentor and protégé interconnection.

### **Informal Mentoring**

Informal mentoring provides both the leader and the subordinate the opportunity for learning and professional growth through a mutual experience over time. While the idea of mentoring is intended for the protégé to grow and learn from the more senior who has skill, know-how, understanding, and experience, this is not exclusively the case; mentors profit

tremendously from the mentoring relationship as well.<sup>114</sup> However, attempting to create the setting for informal relationships seems to be illusive and less understood. To better leverage this kind of mentoring for leader growth and development, one needs to understand more about the way in which to foster this kind of relationship development, how it is initiated and what the ingredient is that help it flourish during times of peace and war. While more study is needed to understand how to promote this kind of an atmosphere a review of some recorded examples provides useful information on the successful components of this kind of informal mentoring environment.

### **Examples:**

I think that there is something to the expression 'born to lead'. But there are many people who have the potential for leadership, just as there are probably many people born with the potential to be great artists that never have the opportunity or the training for the full development of their talents.

—GEN Dwight Eisenhower<sup>115</sup>

### **Fox Conner and Eisenhower:**

Recorded cases of informal mentorship abound throughout not only the Army and its sister services but in the civilian community as well and serve as models or in some cases tradition to consider when crafting the development of the very best in a professional field. One such example from history is the relationship between Fox Conner and Dwight Eisenhower.

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<sup>114</sup> “Understanding the Misconceptions, One of the primary issues for adult and continuing education professionals to understand is that the current mentoring literature contains a number of misconceptions....mentoring relationships benefit the growth and development of the mentor, the organization, and the society as well,” *Mentoring: New Strategies and Challenges*, 91.

<sup>115</sup> Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, *AR 600-65 Personnel- General Leadership Statements and Quotes*, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1985).



Eisenhower was an Army officer who was commissioned in the infantry from the United States Military Academy in 1915.

Early in his career, Eisenhower received orders assigning him to command in a new tank corps then still under development. Commensurate with his duties, Eisenhower was promoted temporarily to lieutenant colonel in 1918; once the war was over, he went back to the rank of major. However, during this time Eisenhower developed some very interesting ideas about this new technology and how to better utilize it by maneuvering around the enemy to create an offensive advantage.<sup>116</sup>

Eisenhower responded to orders to forget his new ideas and followed the orders to the letter; he did not publish any more articles about the use of tanks, stopped his lectures on the use of tanks, and basically kept his new ideas to himself. Yet, Eisenhower had much anxiety about how this might affect his future assignments. In fact, at one point, he broke out in shingles over the stress about being labeled as a staff officer and not considered for troop time. The friction over this issue continued for quite some time, yet years later, the idea of maneuver became the accepted strategy. Eisenhower's relationship between the Infantry Branch and Fort Benning continued to decline over time and, as a result, many barriers for progression developed. One key barrier was the restriction on assignments to troop units needed in order for his career to progress.

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<sup>116</sup> According to Eisenhower, he vocalized these ideas by publishing them in a professional military journal. This led to problems between Eisenhower and the Infantry Branch; the Chief of Infantry did not like Eisenhower's ideas about tanks and the implications it held for the infantry as well as the concept of maneuver. In his own memoir, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, Eisenhower tells the story when he was called to the infantry chief's office at Fort Benning and was told his ideas were not only wrong, but very dangerous and to keep them to himself or face a court-martial, D. D. Eisenhower, (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1967), 173.

Eisenhower desperately wanted some form of an assignment with troops and to avoid staff positions. Because he had performed so well in staff jobs, however, his reputation initially was mostly as a high quality staff officer.

Eisenhower worked for a succession of quality officers who had a tremendous influence on him; Generals Fox Conner, John J. Pershing, Douglas MacArthur, and George C. Marshall.<sup>117</sup> In the fall of 1920 Eisenhower first met Fox Conner. In reality, it was the friendship that Eisenhower had developed with George S. Patton early on that afforded him the opportunity to socialize with Fox Conner a real military brain who had already been to war and accomplished much.<sup>118</sup> As at many social functions, soldiers talk about work and this is exactly what happened here. The discussion fast turned to the use of armor on the battlefield. “Fox Conner was impressed with Eisenhower and his forward thinking.”<sup>119</sup> From this initial impression, Conner offered Eisenhower a job as the executive officer in the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in Panama. Eisenhower knew this was a great chance to work with an outstanding leader. “I knew it would be an opportunity to have a tour of service with such a man. General Conner’s reputation was

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<sup>117</sup> During World War I, Fox Conner was selected chief of operation for the American Expeditionary Force in France by General John J. Pershing. One of his subordinates was then –Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall, for whom Conner developed an enormous amount of admiration, later on recommending Marshall as the military genius and ideal soldier. Fox Conner was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and the Croix de Guerre for service as the “brain” of the American Expeditionary Force. After the war was over, Fox Conner was credited with writing the after-action account that ended in the 1920 National Defense Act which established the course of the interwar Army. At a dinner party which Patton hosted Eisenhower witnessed firsthand the genius of Fox Conner. Conner was believed by many to be the best strategist in the Army at the time.

<sup>118</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier General of the Army President-Elect 1890-1952*, Vol. One, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 73.

<sup>119</sup> W. F. Aldrich, *Fox Conner* (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 1993), 34.

splendid: he was one of the Army brains.”<sup>120</sup> Eisenhower accepted, but his commander general, Samuel Rockenbach explained that he could not spare Eisenhower. It was not until General Pershing became Chief of staff of the Army that the transfer went through. In January, 1922, Eisenhower and his wife finally traveled to Panama to link up with the 20<sup>th</sup> brigade and Fox Conner. However, prior to traveling to Panama, the Eisenhower’s lost their first born son; Icky. This caused both parents to go into a severe depression, which not only strained the relationship between the two, but affected Eisenhower’s work as well. According to historian, Stephen Ambrose, Fox Conner pulled Eisenhower out of this lethargy and distracted Eisenhower with encouragement and study.

Robert Burk describes in his book, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Hero and Politician* that Eisenhower had an almost father-son relationship while in Panama with Fox Conner. While this was not the right job to propel Eisenhower in his career, according to Burk, Conner really had Eisenhower’s best interest at heart. It was exactly what Eisenhower needed after the death of his son, Icky.<sup>121</sup> Connor offered an assortment of books to read and study, with commentary about past battles and previous commanders’ decisions in an attempt to lay the foundation for what would later end in a recommendation from Fox Conner for Eisenhower to attend the Army’s elite school, Command and General Staff College, at Fort Leavenworth; only the cream of the crop attend this school. Eisenhower described this time with Conner as “sort of graduate school in military affairs and the humanities, leavened by the comments and discourses of a man who was

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<sup>120</sup> *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, 178.

<sup>121</sup> R. F. Burk, *Dwight D. Eisenhower: Hero and Politician* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 31.

experienced in his knowledge of men and their conduct.”<sup>122</sup> By Eisenhower’s account of how Fox Conner mentored him during his time as Fox Conner’s executive officer it is clear that he genuinely cared about Eisenhower’s education and his development. This tutelage was much more like a teacher to student than commander and executive officer.

In the book, *A Genius for War*, Carlo D’Este, historian and former Army officer, tells that Fox Conner became Eisenhower’s father figure and teacher, whom he admired above all others.<sup>123</sup> This father figure idea is a reoccurring theme when studying the relationship between Fox Conner and Eisenhower that does not seem to exist with the other impressive list of officers who Eisenhower worked with, Fox Conner clearly stands out. Piers Brendon in *IKE: His Life and Times* also notes how Fox Conner had become a patron, teacher, and something of a father figure to Eisenhower. Eisenhower wrote of Fox Conner:

A wonderful officer and leader with a splendid analytical mind. He is loyal to his subordinates as to superior (and is quick to give credit to juniors)...I served as his brigade exec for 3 years in Panama and never enjoyed any other 3-year period as much. Devoted to his family and to the service, he is a credit to both as well as his country. He held a place in my affections for many years that no other, not even a relative, could obtain.<sup>124</sup>

Clearly this relationship had gone beyond that of supervisor to one of something much more; mentor describes the relationship. This was a very special relationship between the two. This is a quality that is clearly still possible today in relationships as well. Yet, fostering the environment which will promote this kind of relationship is important and should be taken seriously. Possibly

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<sup>122</sup> M. C. Bender, *Watershed at Leavenworth* (Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1990), 33.

<sup>123</sup> C. D’Este, *A Genius for War* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 194.

<sup>124</sup> Piers Brendon, *IKE: His Life and Times* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 77.

the continued initiation of additional administrative requirements, among other requirements, designed to enforce leader development actually inhibits the type of environment that promotes this type of relationship. “This classic notion of mentorship is by its nature a scarce and non-programmable relationship.”<sup>125</sup>

Protégés differ in their levels of learning, maturity, self-worth and experience. Equally important, different cultures demand different approaches to mentoring. Diversity of the needs for the protégé lends itself to an informal mentorship program as illustrated by the unique relationship between Eisenhower and Fox Conner. One key component distilled from this relationship is trust and how it affects the ability of two to better communicate and promote personal growth.

## The General and His Son

In the book, *A General's Letters to His Son on Obtaining His Commission*, General Horace Smith-Dorrien delivers an accumulation of letters written to his son about life with a focus on life as an army soldier intended for all young officers in service to the king.<sup>126</sup> Sir Horace Lockwood Smith-Dorrien rose to the rank of general in the British army who fought in both the Zulu War and the Egyptian Campaign of 1882; he later was attached to the Egyptian army and served at Suakin and on the Nile. He participated in the Tirah campaign of 1897-8 and for his evident proficiency with troops; he was brevetted to lieutenant-colonel as a reward. Soon

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<sup>125</sup> *The Road to Mentoring: Paved with Good Intentions*, 115-127.

<sup>126</sup> Richard Phillips, *Being a Series of Letters Recetly Written by a General Officer to His Son on His Entering the Army Comprising a Course of Elegant Instruction, Calculated to Unite the Characters and Accomplishments of a Gentleman and the Soldier*, 5th Edition, Vol. I. II vols (Covent Garden: McMillan, 1809), v.

thereafter, he participated in the last advance to Khartum and was promoted to brevet colonel for his accomplishments there. Later selected to command a brigade and promoted to major general, he continued to show great potential for advancement. As a commander, Smith-Dorrien displayed character that improved his reputation during the period of conflict prior to WWI. In 1914, while the British expeditionary forces were preparing for WWI, he was appointed to command the II Army Corps.<sup>127</sup> In retirement, he devoted much of his time to promoting the well-being of soldiers and honoring great heroes of war. These compiled letters, though written to his son, were written “less as from a father to a son than as from a senior officer to a young one in whom he takes an interest.” Yet, unlike the common practice of using mentors who are compensated with monetary funds for their wisdom, General Smith-Dorrien donated the proceeds from this book to military charities.

While the book contains some anecdotal advice, it provides a wealth of introspective and retrospective comments that come from long contemplation of how to help preserve the long military traditions of service to the king, as well as promote sound decision-making through thoughtful consideration. One such example is the encouragement to his son to use caution within his new-found liberty of manhood. Grenfell Horace Gerald ‘Dick’ Smith-Dorrien, the oldest son of General Smith-Dorrien, had entered service several years younger than his father had and earlier than what was considered the norm as a result of WWI. Thus, the normal progression for officer development had been compressed into months as opposed to years.

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<sup>127</sup> *Classic Encyclopedia*, April 5, 2007, [http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Sir\\_Horace\\_Lockwood\\_Smith-Dorrien](http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Sir_Horace_Lockwood_Smith-Dorrien) (accessed March 16, 2010).

General Smith-Dorrien encouraged his son to consider himself an asset of the king, and as such accountable to the king, in an attempt to express the value he placed on his son and to show the increased responsibility all had to safeguard freedom, truth, honor and civilization from war.<sup>128</sup> This indeed was a heavy burden to have to carry at such a young age. General Smith-Dorrien pointed out to his son, and all to those who take up the profession of arms, that socially, an officer in the king's army is equal to that of the nobility and that the call to this profession, since the very earliest of times, has been recognized as among one of the highest callings possible. Further, he goes on to encourage his son to put the welfare of his buddies before that of his own when considering future assignments and to place honor as the highest consideration when selecting between the two options.<sup>129</sup> As one goes on to read the letters, it is apparent that many of the considerations and consultations are still found today in the American army. A simple review of command philosophies on the Army sponsored Senior Command Net illustrates that many of the ideas presented in these letters have been carried forward to today's Soldiers.<sup>130</sup>

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Informal Mentoring

Advantages that develop as a result of informal mentoring include the increased trust and respect that naturally occurs from the onset of a mentorship pair forming naturally. Often this occurs due to a high degree of compatibility and cooperation between mentor and mentee and

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<sup>128</sup> *A General's Letters to His Son on Obtaininng His Commission*, 2.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>130</sup> Senior Command Net is a professional forum to connect BN and BDE commanders past, present, and future, <https://forums.bcks.army.mil/secure/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=4325> (accessed March 16, 2010).

increases personal flexibility. While this advantage is important, this type of relationship is rare and difficult to monitor. A disadvantage to informal mentoring is not knowing when this type of relationship is actually developing within an organization. Furthermore, informal mentoring relationships may lead to some vagueness as to the actual goal, if any, to be accomplished. Moreover, the nature of the relationship can develop serious tension when it abruptly ends for one reason or another. Additionally, the development of this type of informal relationship lends itself to less opportunity and less participation.<sup>131</sup>

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Mentoring is successfully practiced by those with a heart for developing others, the discipline to both initiate and sustain a mentoring relationship, and the tools and the experience to be a successful mentor.

-- Col. (Ret) Frank C. Budd, Ph.D.<sup>132</sup>

This research concentrates on the topic of mentoring to find out the degree to which education, doctrine, and current programs prepare leaders for the role of becoming a mentor. Further, this study looks at how mentoring should be understood to promote the mentor and protégé dyad for improved leader development. Identifying the very best in an organization and providing the necessary leader development is an extremely important part of an organizations culture. However, providing the best leadership to all is paramount to the strength of the entire

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<sup>131</sup> Australian Government, *Formal and Informal Mentoring*, 2001-2010, [http://www.eowa.gov.au/Developing\\_a\\_Workplace\\_Program/Six\\_Steps\\_to\\_a\\_Workplace\\_Program/Step\\_4/Women\\_in\\_Management\\_Tools/Effective\\_Mentoring\\_Programs/Links/Informal\\_And\\_Formal\\_Mentoring.asp](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Developing_a_Workplace_Program/Six_Steps_to_a_Workplace_Program/Step_4/Women_in_Management_Tools/Effective_Mentoring_Programs/Links/Informal_And_Formal_Mentoring.asp) (accessed March 21, 2010).

<sup>132</sup> *Performance Improvement*, 6 (3).



organization. Yet, accomplishing these two objectives with the Army population at large in order to insure the best move on to lead while providing everyone the opportunity to excel is important to sustaining that culture and keeping attitudes positive. Additionally, this study looked at ways to make mentoring accessible and found that no matter the approach, trust must develop in order to advance personal and professional development for the overall strengthening of the Army core values and its important traditions.

Leaders of organizations must believe and vocalize the importance of healthy mentorship program as well as provide the necessary resources required to implement and sustain a quality mentoring program. In 2005, the Army leadership made a commitment through its *Leaving a Legacy through Mentorship* program to provide mentorship guidance and utilize mentoring as a tool for leader development. Importantly, the Army's Mentorship Resource Center currently advertised is no longer available and has with time lost its momentum and affect.<sup>133</sup> Leaders react and implement policies or programs to deal with challenges, but after a time, the initiatives become cumbersome and difficult to maintain or simply the leaders do not properly resource the programs for the future. The initiatives are intended to target the population that is most affected, but often end up focused on everyone within the organization as opposed to the few who really need it. Other times, "good ideas" emerge from leaders who have the right motivation and genuine concern, and over time the initiatives also wane and die out as time passes.

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<sup>133</sup> The Army's Mentorship Resource Center is advertised in the Army's Mentorship Handbook displayed on the Mentorship web page. It is an inactive resource for supporting and improving the call to mentorship by the former Chief of Staff of the Army P. Schoomaker, the former Sergeant Major of the Army K. O. Preston and former Secretary of the Army F. J. Harvey. The former Resource Center web page was: [www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/mrc.asp](http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/mrc.asp) and while still advertised, needs to either be removed from the handbook introduction or reactivated for use.

Career success, promotions and leader development are all benefits of mentoring. In addition, positive influences through mentoring relationships affect responses to the work place, improve job satisfaction, career satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and career expectations which improve the organization and saves time and money. This benefit of mentoring is clearly worth capturing and utilizing to promote an engaged workforce that is equipped, ready and perceives that they are part of the team.

The lack of training available to the mentor on successful mentoring techniques and the complexity of human relations is a leader competency training shortfall that currently affects the enhancement of a successful mentoring process. The Army needs to establish and accentuate formal US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) standards or training that has measureable training, objectives and accountability for mentors. While some of what needs to be passed down from one generation to the next is apparent, other areas to focus on are not. Additionally, technology has significantly changed the available tools and methods used by younger generations to relate to one another.

Moreover, understanding how the generational gap has developed and appears to grow may lead to improved generational relations, but additional study is needed to shrink this gap. Training and curriculum development that incorporates mentoring is one way to get at helping reduce the generational gap. This promotes improved understanding and perception all around. Further, the perceived inconsistencies between junior and senior leaders concerning leader actions to promote leader development within units today is one area that needs attention. Determining how to help units affected by the fast-paced operational tempo who are not doing well with leader development is crucial and too needs improvement.

The Army must take actions that will lead to producing a productive environment where officers are ready and willing to participate in mentorship. Providing some additional

understanding of the concept will help. Formal classes and an expansion of the discussion in FM 6-22 can remove the fog that currently surrounds the term and put fact where myth may exist now. Course material should be reviewed, updated and administered with instructors who understand the concept. Lastly, the premier web page advertised by the Army needs to have resources allocated to it. Currently one lieutenant colonel is the sole keeper of the gate for this potentially effective tool; he works it as an additional duty. Clearly, the Army must make a strong commitment to this important aspect of officer development.

In a recent review of the literature, a leading author in the area of mentoring, Ragins, concluded that in terms of outcomes, it did not matter whether the mentoring was informal or formal. It was the quality of the mentoring which was important. Establishing effective formal programs can be a way of trying to ensure higher quality mentoring for a majority of relationships. However, promoting both formal and informal mentoring and mentoring skills in an organization which has a culture that supports mentoring may also result in high quality mentoring.<sup>134</sup>

Thus, the most important issue for mentoring is not whether or not it is formal or informal, but that a culture exists which will support the ingredients necessary for mentoring to occur.

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<sup>134</sup> Australian Government, *Formal and Informal Mentoring*, 2001-2010, [http://www.eowa.gov.au/Developing\\_a\\_Workplace\\_Program/Six\\_Steps\\_to\\_a\\_Workplace\\_Program/Step\\_4/Women\\_in\\_Management\\_Tools/Effective\\_Mentoring\\_Programs/Links/Informal\\_And\\_Formal\\_Mentoring.asp](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Developing_a_Workplace_Program/Six_Steps_to_a_Workplace_Program/Step_4/Women_in_Management_Tools/Effective_Mentoring_Programs/Links/Informal_And_Formal_Mentoring.asp) (accessed March 21, 2010).

## Appendix 1

Personal Information			
Applicant Type Mentor & Mentee			
First Name	John	Last Name	Doe
AKO Email Address	john.doe@us.army.mil		
Agency / ACOM	USAREUR		
City	Darmstadt	State	
Installation	DARMSTADT 233RD BSB	Age	30-34
Gender	Male	Race	Caucasian
Marital Status	Married	Disabled	No
Hobbies/Interests	Family, skiing, soccer, running, reading.		

Professional Information	
Rank	O3
Category	Active Component
Time of Service	5-9 years
MOS/Career Program	
Present Duty Position	S3
Former Duty Position	Platoon Leader
Prof Mil/Civilian Education	
Civilian Education	Bachelors Degree
Civ Ed Alma Mater	Wash State University & Eastern Washington
Civ Ed Degree/Concentration	BA History & BAE Social Science Education
Additional Civilian/Military Information	28 months PL time in Germany & Iraq OIF PL & XO - 14 months Long Range Surveillance PL & Operations Officer - 7 months (ongoing thru Sept 06) Jumpmaster & RSLC Graduate Fully Certified Ski Instructor (PSIA) Nationally Licensed Soccer Coach (USSF & NSCAA)
Competencies	Guiding Successful Operations, Preparing Self, Ensuring Shared Understanding, Leading Others to Success
Unique Skills	

Personality Traits			
Which personality traits/communication styles best describes you?			
Introvert or Extrovert?	Introvert	Serious or Playful?	Serious
Liberal or Conservative?	Conservative	Casual or Organized?	Casual
Whimsical or Reliable?	Reliable	Critical or Agreeable?	Critical
Flexible or Determined?	Flexible	Creative or Analytical?	Analytical
Quiet or Outspoken?	Quiet		

Myers Briggs Profile	ENTJ
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Availability and Preferences	
Which kind of mentor/mentee are you seeking?	Virtual One on One Mentor/Mentee Relationship (online/email)
How much time do you estimate you could devote to the mentor-mentee relationship?	other

Expectations	
What are your specific goals for your mentoring relationship?	Personal and professional development Long term relationships that help build great organizations
Would you feel comfortable giving/receiving honest feedback on your development?	Yes
What do you expect from your mentee/mentor?	Honest feedback Desire to grow and be part of a greater good Genuine interest in mentorship process

Additional Comments	
Is there any other relevant information you would like to include in your profile?	

## Appendix 2

### Army Mentorship General Administrative Reports

Active Users: **3817**

Profiles filled: **1631**

Profiles NOT filled: **1625**

By Gender			
Male	<b>2640</b>	Female	<b>1176</b>

By Marital Status			
Single	<b>320</b>	Married	<b>1027</b>
Separated	<b>21</b>	Divorced	<b>117</b>

By Race			
Total for all Race: <b>3816</b>			
African American	<b>1140</b>	Asian/Pacific Islander	<b>151</b>
Hispanic/Latino American	<b>344</b>	American Indian/Alaskan	<b>39</b>
Caucasian	<b>1991</b>	Other	<b>151</b>

By Age			
Total for all Age: <b>3816</b>			
Age range from 17 to 24	<b>525</b>	Age range from 25 to 29	<b>626</b>
Age range from 30 to 34	<b>737</b>	Age range from 35 to 39	<b>713</b>
Age range from 40 to 44	<b>547</b>	Age range from 45 to 49	<b>367</b>
Age range from 50 to 54	<b>190</b>	Age range from 55 to 59	<b>86</b>
Age range from 60 to 64	<b>15</b>	Age range from 65+	<b>10</b>

## Appendix 3

### Army Mentorship General Administrative Reports<sup>135</sup>

Active Users: **3817**

Profiles filled: **1631**

Profiles NOT filled: **1625**

Total for all Races by Sr. Officers, Sr. Warrant Officers, Sr. NCOs, and Sr. Civilians					
Race	Sr. Officers (O7 - O10)	Sr. Warrant Officers (CW3 - CW5)	Sr. NCOs (E8-E9)	Sr. Civilian (SES)	Total
African American (M)	4	7	44	0	55
African American (F)	0	0	16	0	16
Hispanic/Latino American (M)	1	2	9	0	12
Hispanic/Latino American (F)	0	0	2	0	2
Caucasian (M)	2	14	79	4	99
Caucasian (F)	0	2	21	0	23
Asian/Pacific Islander (M)	0	0	4	0	4
Asian/Pacific Islander (F)	0	1	0	0	1
American Indian/Alaskan (M)	0	0	2	0	2
American Indian/Alaskan (F)	0	0	3	0	3
Other (M)	0	1	6	0	7
Other (F)	0	0	2	0	2
Total	7	27	188	4	226

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<sup>135</sup> LTC Carlson is the officer who is responsible for oversight of the web page. Carlson, LTC Jay D. *Army Mentorship Database Stats*. HQDA DCS- G-1. Email attachemnt, February 7, 2010.

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